



# MONTANA WETLAND NEWS

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News Bits about Montana's Wetlands – To submit your news item, please e-mail [lsaul@mt.gov](mailto:lsaul@mt.gov)

**Montana Wetland Council meeting January 15, 2009 in Helena.** Meeting theme is integrating wetlands into watershed restoration planning and restoration activities. Agenda will be sent soon.

## NEW HIRES

### Wetland Environmental Science Specialist

September 2008, Montana DEQ hired [Steve Carpenedo](#) as the Wetlands Environmental Science Specialist. Steve's responsibilities include helping to implement the [Strategic Framework](#). His M.S. is in Conservation Ecology and Sustainable Development from the Odum School of Ecology, Univ. of Georgia. Steve's thesis involved the development of a GIS-based watershed planning tool for identifying priority areas for wetland restoration and mitigation based on desired wetland ecosystem functions. Other professional experiences include eight years of wildlife research and natural resources management with a focus on habitat conservation and species of conservation concern.

### All Bird Conservation Coordinator

October 2008, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) hired [Catherine Wightman](#) to be the new All-Bird Conservation Coordinator. With more than 400 species of native birds in Montana, many depend upon wetland and riparian habitat. This is a 2-year pilot program. Montana Bird Conservation Partnership Nov 6, 2008 [meeting notes](#).

## NEW GUIDANCE

### Corps/EPA Revised Carabell/Rapanos Guidance

EPA and the Corps issued revised Carabell/Rapanos Guidance December 2, 2008. This was a delayed response to the public comment period that closed in January of 2008. The changes are not extensive and address three areas listed below.

The [Guidance Document](#):

Page 5 - added a paragraph on adjacency of wetlands to traditionally navigable waters

Page 5 - footnote 20, added "For purposes of CWA jurisdiction....to the end" this describes waters that are considered traditionally navigable.

Page 6 footnote 24, added "However, for purposed of determining ...differing flow regimes."

The revised guidance and a set of questions and answers on the guidance are posted at:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/guidance/CWAwaters.html>

Specifically, three documents were changed. In addition to the guidance (above) they include:

[Revised Q&A](#)

[Response to Comments](#)

### Science needs in the wake of Rapanos

Non-navigable streams and adjacent wetlands: addressing science needs following the Supreme Court's *Rapanos* decision. S.G Leibowitz et. al. Please see [review article](#).

### National Wetland Inventory (NWI) in Montana

The MTNHP Wetland and Riparian Mapping Center has many [NWI wetland and riparian mapping](#) projects underway employing the expertise of 4 full time digitizers. We are looking for additional project areas and partners to complete the mapping for Montana. Contact [Lynda Saul](#) or [Linda Vance](#) to discuss a mapping funding partnership for your area of interest.

## NEW STUDIES

### **Brine Contamination to Prairie Potholes from Energy Development in the [Williston Basin](#)**

The U.S. Department of Interior Geological Survey (USGS) has recently selected a project for three-year funding that will address the environmental effects of energy development within the Williston Basin on the sensitive aquatic resources—especially wetlands and underlying aquifers—within the Prairie Pothole Region. Work will begin in 2009 and will include a variety of geohydrologic investigations, with focus on wetland management districts and national wildlife refuges of the U.S. Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service in Northeastern Montana and Northwestern North Dakota. Contacts: [Robert Gleason](#), [Bruce Smith](#), [Rick Sojda](#), and [Joanna Thamke](#).

### **EPA Wetland Program Development Grant RFP**

The annual EPA Region 8 Request for Proposals is expected to be issued sometime in late-January with a 45 day deadline. We expect the [2008 National and Regional priorities](#) to be similar this year. Montana DEQ asks that 2009 proposals address [Strategic Framework](#) priorities and that proposal sponsors work with Working Group leads on project ideas. [Steve Carpenedo](#) education and professional training; [Linda Vance](#) mapping, assessment, and monitoring; [Tom Hinz](#) restoration; [Lynda Saul](#) local government, vulnerable wetlands and public policy. We're specifically looking for pilot projects that integrate the priorities in a watershed focus. More info to follow.

### **Wetland Clearinghouse**

The DEQ is currently updating the Wetlands Clearinghouse and hope to have it online by the middle of January. The updated version will include specific information on the activities of [Strategic Framework](#) Working Groups and the Montana Wetland Council, current grant and funding opportunities, policy and legislation related to wetlands and other pertinent information. If there is information that we have missed or you would like a link to your groups website please contact [Steve Carpenedo](#).

### **Floodplains**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Association of Montana Floodplain Managers Conference will be in Great Falls March 2-5, 2009. With a majority of Montana's wetlands occurring in or near floodplains this is an opportunity to learn about and discuss floodplain protection issues. [AMFM Newsletter](#).

### **Wetland Breaking News**

The November 20, 2008 Issue of *Wetland Breaking News* is available at <http://www.aswm.org/wbn/current.htm>

### **Visit Montana Natural Heritage Program web sites**

- [Natural Heritage Home](#) - mtnhp.org
- [Tracker](#) - mtnhp.org/tracker
- [Species of Concern](#) - mtnhp.org/speciesofconcern
- [Montana Plant and Animal Field Guide](#) - fieldguide.mt.gov
- [Communities Guide](#) - mtnhp.org/community
- [Aquatic Information](#) - mtnhp.org/aquatics
- [Publications](#) - mtnhp.org/reports.asp

### **Montana Animal Species of Concern**

The Montana Natural Heritage Program and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks produced a joint report on [Montana Animal Species of Concern](#) (SOC). Native Montana animals that are considered to be "at risk" due to declining population trends, threats to the habitat and/or restricted distribution. While wetlands make up less than 1% of the landscape in Montana, 21% of the habitat association for all SOC and Potential SOC is wetlands. This new report also identifies habitat type for each species and habitat association summaries by SOC/PSOC animal groups: mammals 11% wetlands, birds 16% wetlands, reptiles 11% wetlands, amphibians 83% wetlands, invertebrates 30% wetlands.